

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-07 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05

USPS-01 NASA-01 OES-07 FCC-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 H-01 BIB-01 /061 W

-----035217 131340Z /42

R 131215Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5839

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PASS ALSO TO COMMERCE SECRETARY KREPS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ETEL, IT

SUBJ: VISIT OF MINISTER OF PTT VITTORINO COLOMBO

REFS: (A) ROME 2983; (B) ROME 4932; (C) STATE 80923;

(E) STATE 141412

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A RECENT MEETING WITH MINISTER COLOMBO, I DISCUSSED THE OFT-POSTPONED VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES THAT HE AND AN ACCOMPANYING COMMERCIAL-TECHNICAL DELEGATION HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO BRING ABOUT DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. I EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE VISIT HAD NOT WORKED OUT DURING THIS PERIOD AND SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF RE-SCHEDULING IT THIS FALL.

2. THE MINISTER SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO SCHEDULE TRIP. AFTER ALL, HE ADDED, HIS WAS NOT A TOURIST TRIP; IT WAS INTENDED AS A SERIOUS MISSION WITH ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES AS WELL AS POLITICAL OVERTONES. ITALY HAS AN ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY WHICH HAS CAPACITY FAR BEYOND THE DOMESTIC MARKET AND GOOD CONNECTIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD AND LESS DEVELOPED AREAS (EG AFRICA). THIS IS AN AREA

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WHERE HE BELIEVED COLLABORATION BETWEEN US AND ITALIAN COMPANIES ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS CAN WORK TO THE ADVANTAGE OF BOTH COUNTRIES. MOREOVER, CLOSER COOPERATION WITH US INDUSTRY AT THIS STAGE OF ITALY'S INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT CAN ONLY BUTTRESS THE CAUSE OF KEEPING ITALY IN THE DEMOCRATIC CAMP. DESPITE INABILITY SCHEDULE VISIT THUS FAR, COLOMBO REACTED POSITIVELY TO THE IDEA OF A RE-SCHEDULED VISIT THIS AUTUMN,

WHICH WOULD PERMIT BETTER ADVANCE WORK AND A BROADER SCOPE TO HIS MISSION.

3. ON THE LATTER POINT, I MENTIONED SEPTEMBER, OR BETTER STILL OCTOBER, SINCE THE LATTER WOULD PERMIT A VISIT TO INTELCOM, THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS EXPOSITION IN ATLANTA WHICH TAKES PLACE OCTOBER 9-15. WE DISCUSSED COMBINING SUCH A VISIT WITH CALLS ON INDUSTRY, AND AN EXPANDED LIST OF WASHINGTON CALLS, STARTING WITH SECRETARY KREPS, AND INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, NASA ADMINISTRATOR ROBERT FROSCHE, AND WITH INTELSAT, COMSAT, AND THE FCC. COLOMBO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ALL OF THE FOREGOING AREAS, AND THAT HIS MISSION, IF IT CAME ABOUT, WOULD INCLUDE IN ADDITION TO EXPERTS FROM HIS OWN MINISTRY, SOME OF THE LEADING NAMES IN THE ITALIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY.

4. THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT THIS MISSION COME TO FRUITION THIS FALL. THE COMMERCIAL-TECHNOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION HAS BEEN AMPLY SPELLED OUT IN THE REFERENCED MESSAGE. THE ADDED DIMENSION OF MINISTER COLOMBO'S INTEREST IN THE SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS FIELD AND POSTAL SYSTEM, AS WELL AS INDUSTRY LEADERS WHO WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM, MERIT TOP LEVEL ATTENTION BY THE AGENCIES CONCERNED. MOREOVER, A CORDIAL WASHINGTON TREATMENT OF THIS MISSION WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE COMMERCIAL PAY OFF, BUT POLITICAL DIVIDENDS AS WELL IN VIEW OF MINISTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COLOMBO'S SIGNIFICANT POSITION IN THE RULING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. MINIMAL WASHINGTON EXPOSURE ON THIS SCORE SHOULD INCLUDE A VISIT WITH CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS. THESE AND OTHER DETAILS CAN BE WORKED OUT ONCE THE VISIT IS CONFIRMED IN PRINCIPLE AND DATES SET. GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009